

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AORG, FAO

SUBJECT: NIGERIAN CANDIDATE FOR FAO DIRECTOR GENERAL POSITION

REF: ROME 8045 (NOTAL)

1. DURING CALL ON ACTING DIRECTOR INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT OBEBE JULY 9, EMBOFF RAISED QUESTION OF DR BUKAR SHAIB'S CANDIDACY FOR FAO DIRECTOR GENERALSHIP. OBEBE SAID THAT SHAIB WAS SERIOUS CANDIDATE FOR DIRECTOR GENERALSHIP WITH FULL BACKING OF FMG. OBEBE ALSO INDICATED THAT SHAIB HAD FULL OAU SUPPORT, AND THAT SEY (GHANA) HAD WITHDRAWN IN HIS FAVOR.

2. ACCORDING OBEBE, FMG ORIGINALLY AGREED TO DEFER TO AN EGYPTIAN AS THE AFRICAN CANDIDATE FOR FAO POST, DESPITE BELIEF SHAIB WAS BETTER QUALIFIED (HE HAS LONG EXPERIENCE WITH FAO). FMG DECISION TO PUT FORWARD SHAIB FOR DIRECTOR GENERALSHIP WAS RESULT OF WITHDRAWAL OF EGYPTIAN IN FAVOR OF SAOUMA OF LEBANON AND ATTEMPTS BY EGYPTIANS TO SWITCH OAU SUPPORT OF THEIR CANDIDATE TO LEBANESE. OBEBE NOTED

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EGYPTIANS MADE NO EFFORT TO NAME ALTERNATE AFRICAN

CANDIDATE (I.E., SHAIB) AND THAT THEY PRESUMED UPON THEIR MEMBERSHIP IN OAU TO TRANSFER AFRICAN BACKING TO SAOUMA. OBEBE SPOKE DISPARAGINGLY OF EGYPTIAN EFFORTS TO USE OAU FOR OWN PRUPOSES AND AS MEANS TO FOIST ARAB CANDIDATES (AND POSITIONS) ON SUBSAHAREN AFRICAN STATES.

3. COMMENT: OBEBE MAY WELL HAVE BEEN REFLECTING GROWING FMG ANNOYANCE AND CONCERN OVER HIGH-HANDED ATTITUDE OF EGYPTIANS AND OTHER ARAB OAU MEMBERS. BELIEVE NIGERIANS WILL WAGE VIGOROUS CAMPAIGN FOR SUPPORT OF SHAIB CANDIDACY.
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